

Overland. Feb 1884.

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NOTES ON THE FRAZER RIVER.

IT was a clear, warm day early in June that I boarded the steamer for Frazer River. Leaving the pleasantly suggestive little town of Victoria, and passing through a narrow channel, we enter the broader and nobler strait of Juan de Fuca. The course lies among low, rocky islets, occasionally wooded but never deeply so; open glades predominate; the shores of Vancouver itself are also low and covered with a thin growth of trees. Room here is given for the fancy to swell, which takes more delight in such warm, generous spaces, resting places for the sun, and in woods where the trees stand well apart, admitting light and air with no tangled undergrowth, than in dense, impenetrable forests.

Sailing is perfect. We wind busily among islands of all shapes and sizes; they come and go in all their green array, with their lovely bits of scenery, always different, never tiresome. Most are now heavily wooded and drowsy with the weight. One we are at present passing is like a huge monster asleep. At the feet of all, gray rocks descend, gently enough at first, but of a sudden plunge into the sea. It is a pretty combination, where the green of the silent woods on the ridges meets the blue of the sky. The strait has narrowed to a ribbon—shores slowly sloping on one side, abrupt on the other: looking ahead no opening is to be seen: we seem to be entering a harbor, when the steamer turns, a rift appears, and we glide out, pursuing an irregular track, pass within easy stone's throw of a rock-bound but pleasing coast, with little beaches clinging to it here and there, sway round a point, the land falls lower and lower, drifts away from us, and we are looking towards wide waters. Glancing back, one fails to see where we came from, unless out of the forest itself; the door has been closed behind. The color of the sea has changed: before it was a deep azure, now it is a dirty

yellow, which becomes more and more sordid as we approach the cause—the muddied discharge of the great river, for miles and miles apparent.

We enter the mouth; on either hand lie the shores, very low, flat, and far-spreading; a thin film of green shows beyond the water, for the meadows are all but drowned in the overflow; and behind, bushes and small trees. A thunder-storm is brooding over the mountains toward the north; you may see where the rain is pouring down; a faint rainbow is visible, three-fourths blotted out, for the sun still shines upon us also and upon this bronze flood. Half submerged lands stretch away in every direction. The approach is not to be compared with the Columbia, a contrast that the traveler fresh from that noble stream is constantly and involuntarily making. Yet the Frazer possesses even here a certain majesty; the width is considerable—two or three miles—yet the termination strikes one as unworthy of so great a river.

The clouds have closed in upon us, and are sending down a shower that well-nigh conceals all defects; but this rapidly moves away as we draw near fairer scenes. Low, bushy islands, green as emeralds, resorts no doubt of many birds, prime places for the naturalist, come in sight; to the north the Cascade range of mountains—a grand background, touched with snows and with long veils of clouds, half concealing, half revealing their huge forms; eastward a few glorified peaks soaring upwards from the sunset; rank vegetation on both sides, dense as in South America. Igripes, as they might be termed, cut through, intersecting and fertilizing the great broad forests. Sometimes when the land sinks, you get a view over miles upon miles of heavily timbered country, looking as to the general effect, where all things are combined in mass, not unlike the eastern prairies, in their great flatness.

At New Westminster the steamer stops a few hours, long enough and to spare to see the little town, which rests upon the high bank commanding fine river views. The site suggests Seattle, although a better clearance has been made among the trees. Some of the homes are attractive, each having a fair display of flowers, chiefly roses, with a far greater allowance of grass and shrubbery. Vegetation here, as well as everywhere else in this region, seems soaked with moisture, hence its rankness; vines and all kinds of creeping plants forming a thick undergrowth in the compact wilderness. A fine post-office is in process of erection in New Westminster, but other buildings are small and mainly constructed of wood. One of the most interesting spots is the public library. As you enter the humble edifice, you are at once confronted by a huge puma; but be not alarmed, the animal is a dead curiosity merely. A few other specimens of natural wonder, not kept in the best condition, lie scattered about the vestibule. The reading-room, lighted dimly by lamps hung from a low ceiling, a tall stove in the center of the apartment, tables, chairs, stands on the uncarpeted floor, bare, nevertheless, an aspect of rude convenience; it contained the English illustrated and other papers, a few magazines, English and American, and the like. The books, not a large collection, and of what choice I know not, stood on rough shelves behind an open wood-work. Altogether, it was a place at which laughter might be easily excited, did not the sincerity and promise give the little spot a peculiar dignity.

Returning to the steamer, I sat for some time at the stern: the water was excessively still, only the sliding down of logs indicating movement; a half-moon cast scarcely a reflection, so smooth was the water; ice could not be more unresponsive; the scene was rich with repose and silence. Behind one might distinguish pale islands and woodland, vague and dreamy in the soft light. Frogs croaked half-asleep from time to time. About ten o'clock we steamed out into the drowsy tide, pursuing our upward course, but were compelled to lie by the bank half

the night, waiting for a mist to be dissipated.

Next morning was cloudy. Through similar scenes to those of yesterday we sail, yet our course is more winding: mountains approach, but recede after reaching a certain distance, so that nowhere are they near enough to be imposing. We touch at a station or two, tying up to some tree close to the bank; houses appear here and there. Debris of the forest strews the sides of the current, now so strong as to hurry trees and great logs down impetuously; pieces fall from the banks, and it would seem as though the channel changed its direction, yet no extra care is taken, and the steamer pursues an even tenor. The mountains come nearer with tops even, sawlike, so far as jealous clouds will permit one to judge. The river has made a great bend, and on what is now the eastern shore the heights are seamed and scarred, but not deeply wooded, except at their base. The track of a cataract is seen but no waterfalls; ice fragments only remain. We graze by woody islands; one may almost seize the branches of curtsying trees; wild roses abound everywhere.

In going through the Cascades the scene is wild and grand like that on the Columbia, though lacking in the strange and rocky shapes of that river. Gangs of men at work on the Canadian Pacific Railroad are descried from time to time, their camp of tents not far off. Ascending heights arise thick with crops of spear-like pines, gleaming as steel. On a long, large, level stretch of land at the foot of crags gray with rock and shafts of trees stand a few scattered houses—an Indian community apparently, for only brown visages look out from the doorways; a little boy, followed by a yelping puppy, chases us along the bank; people in civilized attire, well-to-do, cultivating their little territory here live an easy life; cows, pigs, horses, dogs abound. A few huts seem deserted. Canoes not unlike those of southern seas are drawn up on the bank.

But we gradually draw away from the rude tillage of these children of the soil, and nature, pure and unadulterated, begins

again: a wavy growth of alders, maples, beech, oak, and poplar fringes the shore; behind, huge walls of solid rock now loom up; here and there at the intersection of the mountains there is often space sufficient for wild, scrubby trees to cling tenaciously, and streaks of snow appear or a long thread of torrent gleams on the sight, never so lovely as the Columbian waterfalls, because never so well set. Mountain masses shut us in on every side: on the east twin peaks, snow-spotted, have uplifted themselves; they do not seem far away, not much beyond the heights of the river by which they are framed, so that one sees them through a short vista. On the left, tall trees covered with light green foliage contrast against dark. Here in some respects, the Frazer surpasses the Columbia—in this for instance: there are more windings, so that one is hemmed in suddenly by towering walls as though there were nothing of the world beyond.

Since leaving Port Hope—a village placed on a broad table, flanked by mountains—the river again continues amid great eminences, deep in woods, with masses of snow atop. Where we are now, the west bank rises green and soft, with towering plumes of some beautiful trees slowly ascending tier upon tier; here and there, sharp towers of pine shoot above the mass, then a height easily soaring, to be carried farther aloft in a lofty peak; so it is for miles and miles. The continuous-ness of this range is wonderful, far greater than that of the Columbia, for here we have been steaming amid this gigantic brotherhood of mountains for hours, yet do not seem to be passing beyond; the scenery is finer than during the morning; the elevation is also greater. We pass a pretty little island with its rocky spine stretching up the current, forming a wedge to cut the stream. At the lower end the waters reunite but to contend; here there is the most uproarious tumult; a novice is appalled, but two trials enable the steamer to stem the tide in safety. There are now no extensive views off upon the land, though the sun is out strong and splendid. On the right hand we are under a steep cliff, whose pines, were they to

fall, would cross our steamer, but we shift aside quickly. Houses, occupied by Indians, appear oftentimes, each with its little patch of garden. All the natives are short and stout in stature, their faces lugubrious, yet they seem happy and fun-loving: the deck-hands are Indians, and perform their work with great readiness and energy; they make their labor a pastime. Indians and Chinamen are in about equal proportion, evidently on good terms. Squaws squatted on their haunches gaze expressionlessly upon white folk; they seem a witless, inoffensive race.

A superb day in mid-June witnessed our return voyage: the sky was of purest blue, foliage most vivid green, air and river calm. The best part of the scenery lies between Port Hope and Yale: the portion from the former place downward is wild at times, always pleasing, but somewhat monotonous. Early in the morning the boat takes on board a herd of cattle: to see the poor frightened things driven on deck is one of the characteristic sights of this new region. Indians careering about on their ponies dash in among the wild-eyed, terror-stricken oxen, and quickly force them through the narrow corrals.

From the place whence we started yesterday morning to ascend the river to New Westminster, the course passed over by night, the scenes are very interesting: this is apparently an excellent country for agriculture, to become at no distant period a great farming region. Lands of vast extent, heavily timbered or with low, dense growth, lie along the river; mountains, fallen away, their tops speckled with snow, present an irregular outline of crest and peak; to the south-west broad outlooks over levels of forest land fascinate the eye: Mount Baker is in sight. Still further down the Frazer widens into a lake. The steamer is at least one-half mile from the northern shore, while the southern lies as far away as the vision can pierce. Sails and steamboats flit over the ample expanse; we are evidently approaching the mouth. Huge salmon canneries appear from time to time on land that looks lower than the water; a forest, reaching to the distant

mountains, only succeeds in lifting its tree-tops to our level.

The strait is smooth as glass. Before entering Victoria we glide into a little bay for the purpose of landing the cattle. The spot is one of the loveliest imaginable, fringed

with quiet woods, gentle slopes of green, rocks crested with grass sliding into the still water, pleasant glades where trees not too thickly placed make charming nooks, little beaches tucked away, all make a delightful picture of repose and beauty.

Henry Colbach.

THOMAS LODGE AND HIS FRIENDS.

SOME of the minor Elizabethan writers certainly attract more attention now than they did a score of years ago, but they will amply repay even closer and more affectionate study. It has of late become very easy to talk of "the England of Shakspeare," and the influences that surrounded his first literary ventures; but it is, and ever will be, extremely hard to secure a definite conception of what that England really was. One cannot do it by reading a few epoch histories, primers of literature, and articles in reviews. Sad to say, one of the widespread fallacies of the age is that you can better find out what sort of books a man wrote by reading about those books than by going to the books themselves. It has come at last to this, that many persons calling themselves educated spend the better part of their lives in merely reading about persons and periods worth study—indeed, only by study made profitable; taking, for instance, some critic's opinion of Sidney, some historian's view of the Norman Conquest, as final and complete. The reading of Sidney's sonnets, not modernized but exactly as he wrote them; the study of the noble "Saxon Chronicle"—manliest and most truthful record any people except the ancient Hebrews ever had—would do more towards revivifying the past than the committing to memory all the books about Sidney or about the Saxons that have been written since the days of Cadmus.

These notes upon Thomas Lodge, his surroundings and his friends, must be taken as wayside gleanings from the England of Hooker, Bacon, Spencer, Marlowe, and Shakspeare. Perhaps it will be found that

writers we have thought we could easily afford to ignore explain in some degree the sources of inspirations greater than their own. We must try to recreate the Elizabethan world, using to this end the patient research of literary antiquarians, the critical essays of German and English scholars, and the faithful reprints in the costly publications of Ballad, Old English Text, New Shakspeare, and similar societies that aim to reproduce, with scrupulous attention to details, the street-songs, chap-books, controversial pamphlets, pastoral stories, sermons, miracle plays, and whatever illustrates the land, the age, and the people. Among the almost forgotten worthies of the last quarter of the sixteenth century, we shall find many that possess abounding merits, keen wit, sparkling style, glowing earnestness of thought. No student can afford to neglect such works as Gascoigne's "Steele Glassee," Sidney's "Apologie for Poetrie," Raleigh's "Fight in the Revenge," Watson's "Passionate Centurie," Stubbes's "Anatomie of Abuses," Lyly's "Euphues," and Lodge's "Rosalynde."

Those who have studied "Ward's English Poets," will remember that it contains five of the lyrics of Thomas Lodge; and that Mr. E. W. Gosse prefaces them with a brief sketch of the author, telling us, for instance, that Lodge "is certainly the best of the Euphuists, and no one rivaled him in the creation of a dreamy scene, 'out of space, out of time,' where the loves and jousts of an ideal chivalry could be pleasantly tempered by the tending of sheep." "But," Mr. Gosse continues, "it is by his lyrical poetry that he preserves a living place in literature. His